

Charleston Wine + Food was founded in July 2004 by a group of community leaders with a vision of creating an event to promote and elevate the region's culinary brand. The goal was to put the Charleston area on the map as a culinary destination, with a reputation rivaling other well-known food and dining destinations, and to bring national and international attention to the region. To do so, the festival would attract highly affluent visitors who would return to Charleston throughout the year to help drive the city's economic engine by staying in our hotels, dining in our restaurants, and otherwise spending money locally. The festival was strategically timed to create visitor demand in Charleston during a time of year normally not popular for tourism. Our mission is to celebrate, educate, enrich, and promote the Lowcountry's diverse culinary + hospitality community through world-class experiences. The Charleston Wine + Food festival is a direct articulation of our mission. It's a platform to share stories, elevate the people in this community, celebrate our city, and create an enriching experience for the people who live and work here. Charleston Wine + Food infuses our homegrown flavor with top chefs, winemakers, authors, storytellers, artisans, and food enthusiasts from around the globe for a five-day event that spans the first full weekend each March. We look forward to producing the next installment of Charleston Wine + Food festival March 6 - 10, 2024. The festival features over 100 events spanning the tri-county region. The funds requested would aid in the production of the event including tenting, entertainment, rentals, and event logistical needs.

**Justification of Request/Public Benefit:** Over the last 17 years, the festival has welcomed nearly 335,000 attendees and generated over \$112.2 million in economic impact; it is a direct contributing factor to the growth of the region's culinary brand and its success. Ninety-five cents of every dollar we spend producing the Festival has a direct measurable impact on our city's economy and is mission-based. In addition to our economic impact, we support local talent, inject jobs into the community, and bring attention to the food community of our entire state.

#### WE SUPPORT TALENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FESTIVAL

Successful festivals grow and evolve in response to the needs of the communities they serve. In an effort to be a more inclusive organization and decrease the barriers for chef and beverage professionals to participate in our festival, we have several ways that we directly compensate our talent.

- We cover food + beverage costs for participating talent.
- We provide per-head stipends for our Signature Brunch, Lunch, and Dinner host restaurants.
- We provide on-the-ground logistical and event support including rentals, compostable plateware + flatware, signage, and more.
- We cover accommodations and travel for visiting talent.

- We provide access to participating talent to enjoy the festival and connect with their peers.

#### WE INJECT JOBS INTO OUR COMMUNITY

We think Charleston is a pretty special place that is filled with talented professionals, businesses, and entrepreneurs. It makes us proud to reinvest directly into our local business community.

- We directly hire 80-100 independent contractors to help produce the festival; this does not include the mass hiring our largest vendors undergo annually to support production.
- We are proud to work with and patronize a community of talented event planners, event producers, beverage logistics companies, rental companies, security, tenting, venues, and more.
- We provide a paid externship opportunity for enrollees and graduates of the One80 Place Training Program to get on-the-ground experience at the festival.

#### WE ENRICH AND EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY

The programming presented annually at the Charleston Wine + Food festival is a compilation of shared stories and experiences from our local food + beverage industry. Food is a powerful connector and storyteller. It allows our organization to present histories, cultures, and practices that are important and deserve attention and recognition to the world. We enlighten, enrich, and educate our community through food experiences.

#### WE PUT OUR STATE'S FOOD COMMUNITY ON A NATIONAL STAGE

One of our cornerstone purposes is to bring national recognition to the food scene of the Lowcountry and the entire state, which we execute through multiple national, regional, and local media partnerships in addition to strategic marketing campaigns.